From:	rzhwex@gmail.com
To:	Ehud Barak <ehbarak1@gmail.com>
CC:	
Date:	Thu, 5/27/2010 4:32:46 PM
Subject:	Fw: (s)5/26, POLITICO: Wexler for Israel?

FYI.

Sent from my Verizon Wireless BlackBerry

From: slcharles1@aol.com
Date: Wed, 26 May 2010 22:55:04 +0000
To: Robert Wexler<rzhwex@gmail.com>
Subject: Fw: (s)5/26, POLITICO: Wexler for Israel?

Sent via BlackBerry by AT&T

From: COResorces@aol.com
Date: Wed, 26 May 2010 18:39:28 EDT
To: <smallb@co-resources.net>; <mahlem@co-resources.net>; <slcharles1@aol.com>; <coresources1@gmail.com>; <peruginomr@co-resources.net>; <baccak@co-resources.net>
Subject: (s)5/26, POLITICO: Wexler for Israel?

POLITICO
Wexler for Israel?
Former Rep. Robert Wexler (D-Fla.) is being courted to be Obama's ambassador to Israel, three Washington Middle East hands tell POLITICO.
By Laura Rozen
May 26, 2010

Wexler, a strong pro-Israel ally for the Obama White House going back to the 2008 presidential campaign, has become an even more frequent and influential presence in the White House and Foggy Bottom since resigning his House seat in January to become president of the S. Daniel Abraham Center for Middle East Peace, a revived Washington think tank named after its benefactor, the Slim-Fast-heir turned Middle East peace evangelist/philanthropist.

Secretary of State Hillary Clinton spoke at the center's debut at Washington's swanky W Hotel earlier this month, where Wexler joked in his remarks that every morning he gets a call from Abraham asking him, "What are you doing to promote peace today, Robert?"

Wexler didn't respond to a query. One U.S. official said he'd recently heard the same Wexler-for-Israel ambassador rumor, but when he asked Wexler about it, Wexler said no, he's enjoying his current job. Another official had also heard the Wexler rumor in the past couple weeks, but didn't know if it was true.

But several U.S. officials and Washington Middle East hands have suggested that the administration has come to consensus that it wants to put a high-impact political appointee in the Israel envoy job, as the administration aggressively steps up its public relations outreach to the Jewish community, and seeks momentum for its Middle East peace efforts.

Proximity talks between the Israelis and Palestinians got underway earlier this month after more than a year of administration heavy lifting and considerable frustration. Obama's Middle East peace envoy George Mitchell, with two rounds of the talks under his belt, gave two rare Washington speeches earlier this week at the U.S. Institute of Peace and Jewish Primary Day School to talk about his peacemaking efforts - something's he's been reluctant to do since taking the job until now.

In some ways, the Obama administration's stepped-up pro-Israel PR blitz the past month represents the kind of outreach Wexler has been doing for Obama all along going back to the presidential campaign -- talking up Obama's commitment to Israel's security and the benefits to Israel's security of the peace process, to Jewish and wider audiences.

What's unclear to some associates is if Wexler would be willing to give up a position now where he has influence, frequent access to the highest levels of both Washington and Middle Eastern capitals, without the constraints and hassle (not to mention salary) of a government job. “Wexler is playing a very important role, really advancing a dialogue in the community" in his current NGO role, one Washington Middle East hand said on condition of anonymity. “He really in a short time has stepped up to the plate.”

The Middle East hand didn’t know if Wexler had recently been re-offered or would accept the ambassador job. But “when the president asks you, one is hard pressed to say no," the former official acknowledged.

In related news, Tom Goldberger, a career foreign service officer currently serving as the director of the Israel/Palestinian affairs office in the State Department Near East Affairs bureau, will become deputy chief of mission at the U.S. Embassy in Tel Aviv this summer, officials confirmed.

Washington Middle East hands also said that Gen. Keith Dayton, who has been leading U.S. efforts to train the Palestinian Authority security forces and increase confidence measures between Israel and the PA, is going to retire. Dayton had stayed on a fourth year in the job at Mitchell's request. It wasn't immediately clear who would succeed him in the job.

Meantime, President Obama plans to meet with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu at the White House on Tuesday, the White House confirmed. The invitation was extended by White House chief of staff Rahm Emanuel, on a family vacation to Israel, in a meeting with Netanyahu today.

Obama also looks forward to meet with Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas at the White House in the near future, White House spokesman Tommy Vietor told POLITICO.

With proximity talks underway, Obama's planned meetings with both leaders is "designed to help move that process forward," Vietor said.